

**City of Sterling Heights  
ETHNIC COMMUNITY COMMITTEE**

Official minutes of the Thursday, October 2, 2014 regular meeting.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Sharron Allen  
Mohammed Alomari  
Omie Brooks  
Ike Cabase  
Ann Jerzowski  
Susan Kattula  
Steve Naumovski  
Andrew Pulford  
Iqbal Singh

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Doug Najor

**OFFICIALS PRESENT:**

Citizen Services Specialist Sue Giallombardo  
Community Relations Director Steve Guitar

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Agenda: MOTION by Pulford, SECONDED by Allen.  
Approved 6-0

4. Approval of Minutes: MOTION by Pulford, SECONDED by Allen.  
Approved 7-0

5. Communication from Citizens:

- Paul Smith is in attendance and thanked the committee for having him at the meeting. He heard about a possible item of discussion that he may want to comment on, but he will defer his comments until the item comes up on the agenda.

6. Communications from the Sterling Heights Police Dept.-Sgt. Jim Selewski:

- Selewski stated that this will be his last meeting. He has been working with the committee since 2008 and has had a wonderful experience. Selewski added that he hopes he has been helpful to the committee and enjoyed making friendships with everyone. Selewski introduced Sgt. Linda Deprez.

- Deprez was hired into the city in 1989 and resides in Sterling Heights. She stated that she is looking forward to working with the committee and her role in giving back to the community.

## 7. Agenda

### **A. 2014 Diversity Distinction Awards**

- Kattula suggested that the committee limit the number of awards that are presented. She added that it might depend on the number of nominees.
- Pulford suggested a limit of seven.
- Kattula stated that committee members should take each nominee into consideration.
- Cabase concurred and said to take into consideration what the person or group being nominated does to make a difference, while keeping the guidelines in mind.
- Jerzowski asked if Sgt. Selewski is eligible for nomination.
- Kattula stated yes, and based on the criteria, it will be up to the committee to decide.
- Alomari made a motion to limit the number of awards to seven. Motion seconded by Naumovski. Motion passed: 9-0.

### **B. “Getting to Know Your Neighbor” – update brochures**

- Giallombardo apologized for not completing the brochures. Due to the employee cuts in Community Relations, there hasn’t been time. She stated she will work on them in the next couple of months and have them ready for the Cultural Exchange.
- Guitar suggested changing the format to a ‘fact sheet’ as opposed to a brochure.
- Jerzowski stated that she might be able to assist if needed.
- Guitar stated that we will have to stick to a two-color document, but that the online version can be full color.
- Cabase told members to pass ideas on to Guitar or Giallombardo.
- Kattula asked Giallombardo to send an example of what the fact sheet would look like.
- Alomari asked if new cultures could be added.
- Giallombardo stated yes.

### **C. Business Cards**

- Guitar stated that it would be a good idea for members to have business cards, stating their role on the Ethnic Community Committee, and have their personal e-mail address or phone number, to use while making contacts for any ethnic-sponsored events.
- The cards would show the city address, since members are representing the city, but would have personal contact information. This is not a requirement, ordering cards is optional.

- If you are interested in ordering business cards, forward your contact information to Giallombardo.

#### **D. “Getting to Know Your Neighbor” – panel discussion**

- Guitar stated the topic was brought up early in the year to host another panel discussion, and suggested asking Martin Manna to speak, followed by a diversified discussion panel; and asked the committee if there is any interest in hosting the event again.
- Pulford likes the idea of having a Chaldean discussion, but would like to plan another one as well so we don’t focus one group.
- Allen agreed that the panel shouldn’t be limited to one group.
- Naumovski suggested inviting a mix of groups and bring them together on a current hot topic. Committees members were in agreement.
- Alomari made a motion to re-visit this topic at the November meeting. Motion seconded by Jerzowski. Kattula stated that there is no need for a motion.
- Jerzowski suggested that a sub-committee be formed to coordinate the panel discussion event. Kattula suggested the committee contact Dennis Burin to facilitate the discussion.
- Item will be re-addressed at the November meeting.

#### **8. Receipt of Correspondence:**

- Giallombardo reminded members of the Volunteer Appreciation Banquet on October 29. Please let her know if you are able to attend.
- Naumovski stated that he received the e-mail correspondence from Julie Bondy, newest member appointed to the committee, stating that she was looking forward to meeting everyone and if anyone would like to call to talk prior to the meeting, they should feel free. Naumovski stated that he called her to welcome her and ask about her heritage and she stated that she is Italian, yet she joined the committee to represent the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender) community. Naumovski told Bondy that she would be a part of the Ethnic Community Committee and suggested that the meetings might be counter-productive to her cause. Naumovski said that he then received a call from Councilman Taylor accusing him of not welcoming a new member to the committee. Naumovski said that was inaccurate, he was only voicing his opinion of the purpose of the Ethnic Community Committee. Naumovski then received a phone call from the Detroit News alleging discrimination. He denied that that was his intention. He added that he doesn’t believe that city council members should be calling board members to try to influence them one way or the other.
- Cabase stated that no individual member of the committee represents the committee as a whole.
- Bondy then sent another e-mail, officially resigning from the Ethnic Community Committee.

- Kattula stated that she understands what Naumovski is saying, adding that a majority of residents in Macomb County, when they hear the word diversity, will think of their heritage, such as Polish, Italian, etc.
- Cabase stated that committee members do not need to worry about what other members like and do not like.
- Naumovski stated that he has the right to clarify what he said, and simply called to welcome Bondy to the committee. He added that the newspaper responded to him, and the committee.

#### 9. New Business: None

#### 10. Old Business:

- Cabase reminded Naumovski to make payment for the ads that were placed in the Cultural Exchange program.
- Naumovski asked if he owed the money or the sponsors.
- Giallombardo stated that she invoiced certain sponsors per Naumovski's request, and has received payment from those sponsors, and added that Naumovski is responsible for payment of the remaining \$525.00, as he was the point of contact for the ads.
- Cabase asked that members be courteous of one another and RSVP for meetings and events, and make an effort to attend the few functions sponsored by the committee.
- Pulford stated that he attended the Welcoming Michigan Convening in Detroit, and sat on the panel as a guest, representing the committee. The purpose of the panel was to help bridge the gap among newcomers and long time residents to the community. He added that some good ideas were presented, such as throwing block parties, lining the streets with ethnic-themed flags and changing street names to honor individuals that made or make a difference.
- Pulford added that it was a great event to attend and he was glad to be a part of it.
- Kattula added that she believes the city of Sterling Heights has been bridging the gap for years, which is why so many immigrants and refugees are coming here.
- 
- Moira Smith, resident of Sterling Heights, stated that she was in attendance as an interested citizen and wished everyone well on their endeavors.
- Resident Jackie Ryan was also in attendance, and stated that the meeting very interesting to her and thanked the committee members for welcoming her.
- Verna Babula, a resident for 38 years, was in attendance and said she was sorry it took her so long to attend a meeting, and thanked the committee.

#### 11. Adjournment. Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.